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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies focused their coverage September 3 - 6 on Council of Labor Affairs Chairwoman Chen Chu's attempt to resign from her current position, and efforts to secure the release of crewmen aboard three Taiwan fishing boats being detained by Somali militias.

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the "China Times" said it is evident that recognizing Chinese mainland academic qualifications should not be viewed as a government issue for democratic Taiwan. "Taiwan Daily," on the other hand, ran an editorial that argued that the matter involves not only Taiwan's sovereignty, but national identity as well.

3. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" said in its editorial that KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou proposal for a 'Direct Link Timetable' shows that he is intent on appeasing China. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" editorialized that Ma dreams about cross-strait peace but has no plans to defend Taiwan. The pro-status quo, English-language "China Post" ran an editorial that stated Taiwan needs arms to deter China from attacking the island.

4. The "Liberty Times" editorialized that China cannot prove to the world that the country is seeking peace while the country has deployed more than 700 missiles aimed at Taiwan. The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said in its editorial that China should first remove these missiles in order to seek peace across the Taiwan Strait. End summary.

1. "Does the President Need to Deal With China's Academic Qualifications"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (09/06) that:

"For years, DPP and TSU political figures have said they don't want any contact with China. Consequently, they don't intend to recognize Chinese academic qualifications. But what are the consequences? Maybe they have never figured this out? In fact, whether the authorities recognize Chinese academic qualifications or not will influence only the public sector, but not the private one. ."

". [T]he United States has the most first-rate higher educational system in the world, and the U.S. government has never attempted to 'recognize' diplomas. It is evident that recognizing academic qualifications is not a necessary duty for a democratic country, and there is no need to have a president speak in a threatening way at the front line. ."

2. "Based on the Insistence of National Sovereignty and National Identity [of Taiwan], China's Academic Qualifications Should Not Get Recognized"

The pro-independence, "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] carried in its editorial (09/06) that:

" . [I]f the government recognizes China's academic qualifications, it involves a deeper issue concerning national identity, and not merely [the issue of] the survival of Taiwan universities. .

" . [I]n China, universities are ideological state machines, which lack in the space for liberal thoughts and independent judgments. Regarding the issue of unification or independence, China would not allow [in its schools any] opinions that would lead to secession from China. Taiwan students who study in China have to accept the ordinary professionalism as well as the brain-washing education featuring 'Chinese nationalism.' .

"Moreover, China has greatly loosened the criteria of enrollment in recent years for the necessity of 'United Front' tactics to attract Taiwan students and Taiwan businessmen's children. . This has jeopardized the credibility of Chinese academic qualifications. ."

13. "Ma Ying-jeou's Proposal of 'Direct Link Timetable' Demonstrates He Is Appeasing China and Not Putting Taiwan Sovereignty and the People's Interest First"

The pro-independence, "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] said in its editorial (9/4) that:

"The fact that Ma Ying-jeou chose foreign media to publicly announce the KMT's 'timetable for cross-strait exchanges' highlights that Ma is full of ambition toward the 2008 presidential election. It also shows that the Pan-Blue Camp has turned its China policy into substantive moves. That is why the 'cross-strait timetable' has been set. Ma Ying-jeou's proposal will result in Taiwan's restraining itself and losing its bargaining chips. Such an announcement of 'peace by surrender' will certainly make China very happy. But it is disadvantageous for Taiwan's sustainable development. Taiwan will lose all its favorable conditions for negotiations. We believe that the people of Taiwan will not accept this. ."

14. "The Question Being Which Side Is Chairman Ma Taking?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] noted in its editorial (9/5):

"Some time ago, there were people who promoted the theory that 'cross-strait peace would relieve people from military services.' Now, according to [KMT] Chairman Ma [Ying-jeou]'s thinking, there seems to be the implication that 'cross-strait peace would relieve Taiwan from military purchases.' Although cross-strait peace is not a bad thing, has China ever promised not to resort to military forces against Taiwan? Would China be willing to recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation? If Lien Chan's being [brainwashed] of unification during his visit to China can be seen as greatly reducing hostility, then there will be hardly any difference between that kind of cross-strait peace and Taiwan's surrendering.."

15. "China's Rise Is Inevitable, Taiwan's Absorption Is Not"

The status-quo, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (09/06) that:

"It is unrealistic to think that Taiwan can match the military opening of a rising superpower, but it can deter an attack - deterrence is the prime aim of military power, rather than to winning a directory victory. For this reason, those in power - both the ruling party and the opposition - should consider carefully their attitude to offers by the United States of military equipment to boost the deterrent value of Taiwan's military forces. Many observers outside of Taiwan are convinced that the 'Pan-Blue' camp is simply playing politics of the worst sort in its opposition to the purchase of military equipment from the United States. Saying that China will never attack Taiwan is a delusion. Making an attack too expensive to contemplate will effectively deter China's use of military power against Taiwan.

"The rise of China's power is inevitable, but Taiwan's absorption by the communist power is not."

16. "The White Paper That Is Like a Liar's Words"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (9/3):

"For Taiwan, the [recent Chinese military] White Paper is like an open book of lies. A democratic Taiwan means no threat to Communist China at all. Yet China has deployed 700 missiles against Taiwan across the Strait. If this is called 'no intention of hegemony,' are the people of Taiwan not being making fun of? What's more, Taiwan's seeking [to build] its missile defense is nothing but to try to humbly protecting itself under the missile intimidation [from China]. However, China is working on the United States to try to block Taiwan's building its minimum self-defense capability. The United States, of course, will not buy it. Not only did the United States and Japan include the stability of the Taiwan Strait as one of the goals of common concern in early 2005, but the United States will not agree with the White Paper, which puts Taiwan into China's exclusive domain.."

17. "China's Credibility Gap"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] carried in its editorial (09/06) that:

"Ahead of Chinese President Hu Jintao's expected visit to the US, Beijing has issued a white paper entitled Endeavors for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. The paper points out that the Taiwan question involves China's

core interests, and that action by the US to provide help or protection to Taiwan would `erode trust between big powers.'

". Taiwan is not a threat to the Chinese Communist Party, but this has not prevented Beijing from targeting over 700 missiles at it. This totally contradicts the white paper's assertion that `China will never seek hegemony or be the first to use nuclear weapons.'

"Taiwan naturally needs to seek missile defense, as this is a legitimate matter of self-defense. Rather than putting so much effort into obstructing Taiwan's inclusion under a missile defense umbrella, China should simply remove the missiles targeting Taiwan and declare the Taiwan Strait a demilitarized zone. This would be a way of proving that it wants to resolve the cross-strait issue peacefully.

"If China seeks a peaceful resolution to the cross-strait issue, all the countries of the world will see that China indeed is not seeking hegemony, and that its rise is indeed peaceful."

KEEGAN